



Iraq Reconstruction Update

A Weekly Progress & News Report

03.01.06



BIRDSEYE VIEW - The Al Basrah Oil Terminal as seen from the roof of the platform. The terminal produces approximately two million barrels of oil each day. On Feb. 7, 2006, the Iraqi navy's marine unit took the lead in platform security. (Photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class John J. Pistone)

Notable Quotes

"You [coalition forces] saved me from death to life. You are providing good support for the people of Iraq. I give thanks to you."

(Story Page)

Kadhem Utob, retired farmer

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Video Download

Reconstruction Interview



FORWARD OPERATING BASE SUMMERALL - Capt. Scott Goehring speaks to a reporter about the coalition's role in assisting the Baiji city council, current coalition reconstruction projects in Baiji and the relationship between the city council and coalition forces. View the interview:

<http://www.dvidshub.net/vjump.php?vid=10717>

Progress Dispatches

Fallujah Facility Begins Construction

Construction began on a \$3 million electrical maintenance facility in Fallujah in the Al Anbar Province. The project, which consists of an electrical warehouse and maintenance facility, will provide a much-needed site for the electrical workers and engineers to help maintain and upgrade the 33/11 kV electrical distribution system throughout the city and surrounding villages.

Ninawa Hospital Renovation Project Complete

A \$290 thousand hospital renovation project in Shekhan Village, Ninawa Province is complete. Renovations to the Shekhan Hospital included a physicians' residence and drug store building, upgrades to the electrical and plumbing systems, paint, plaster, floor and wall tiles, windows, and interior/exterior wall work. This renovated hospital serves as the main hospital for the village of Shekhan, as well as neighboring villages Ba'idrah, Pirozawa, Nagizliyah and Sheykh Azu, providing improved medical care to over 3,000 Iraqi people in these communities.

Al Tarbia School Will Serve 250 Students

Construction is complete on a \$100 thousand school renovation project in Adhamiyah, Baghdad Province. The project required the repair of a damaged structure, new electrical service with additional lighting and ceiling fans, painting, and leveling of the school grounds. The Al Tarbia school will benefit the 250 students in grades K-6 in the Adhamiyah community. Presently, 45 of 46 school projects in the Baghdad Province are either complete or under construction.



20,000 Will Benefit From Water Network Project

A \$944,000 water network project that will provide potable water to nearly 20,000 residents of Baghdad has been completed. The Ghazaliya Water Network project required the contractor to provide all labor, materials, transportation and equipment for the construction of the water distribution network in the New Ghazaliyah district of NW Baghdad.





Army Helping Iraqi Businesswomen Win Contracts

By Lt. Col. Stan Heath
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

WASHINGTON - About 250 reconstruction contracts worth more than \$250 million have been awarded to women-owned businesses in Iraq over the past eight months.

Opportunities for Iraqi businesswomen are increasing, with help of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, according to a civil engineer who just returned from Iraq.

Karen Durham-Aguilera, a member of the Senior Executive Service and former director of programs for the Project and Contracting Office, spoke recently about current U.S. efforts to empower Iraqi engineers and businesswomen at a U.S. Institute of Peace and State Department-sponsored seminar in Washington, D.C.

The efforts to add women-owned businesses to the reconstruction equation were deliberate, Durham-Aguilera said. As of June 2005, only one contract had been awarded to a women-owned firm.

To increase that number, Durham-Aguilera and a small team of contracting personnel conducted several networking sessions with Iraqi women-owned firms to connect them with general contractors, and to teach and coach them how to put together successful bids to win awards for construction contracts. Goals and incentives were also established for general contractors to hire women-owned Iraqi firms as subcontractors.

Iraq-American Azza Humadi, PCO women's coordinator, also spoke at the event. In order to reach out to Iraqi businesswoman, Humadi frequently travels outside of the safety of the international zone to assist Iraqi women in their efforts to bid on and win contracts. Armed with information she collected on over 400 Iraqi women-owned companies, Humadi literally goes "door to door" marketing these firms to the international design-build contractors on the ground.

"Karen and Azza have done groundbreaking work in Iraq with women-owned businesses," said Merriam Mashatt, former director of Capacity Development for PCO.



Karen Durham-Aguilera takes a "hands-on" approach to inspecting a reconstruction site in Iraq last year. (USACE Photo)

Over the past year the U.S. has channeled a significant portion of its reconstruction dollars to Iraqi businesswomen and for capacity development, which is vital to self-sustainment of the Iraqi people, Mashatt said. She was also a presenter at last week's forum.

Durham-Aguilera was detailed for seven months from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineer's North West Division, headquartered in Portland, Oregon. She oversaw about \$12 billion in reconstruction, a portion of the overall \$18.4 billion Iraq Reconstruction Relief Fund.

"One of the best parts of my time in Iraq was to work together with our many Iraqi professionals, a group of over 300 people," the registered engineer told the group. "Many of these women professionals are engineers, architects, accountants, and project managers."

The Iraqi ministries, the U.S. State Department, the Multi-National Forces-Iraq, the U.S. Agency for International Development, PCO, the Corps of Engineers, and Iraqi contractors that build the construction projects, work in unison to rebuild," Durham-Aguilera said.

She added, "The reconstruction effort is a huge partnership."

Some of Durham-Aguilera's efforts were to increase the number of contracts going directly to Iraqi firms. While in Iraq, she visited construction projects in Baghdad, Kirkuk, Erbil, Basra, Nassriyah, and other locations.

Story Continued on Page 10

Published by ASA(ALT)





Capacity Development

Power System Modeling and Software Training

Compiled By David Leach
Director, GRD/PCO-Baghdad Capacity Development

Training has been completed on a \$400 thousand capacity development project for the Ministry of Electricity (MoE).

Conducted in Schenectady, NY last month, MoE engineers received training in the use of state-of-the-art power system modeling software.



The software is a planning tool that simulates, analyzes, and optimizes electrical power system performance. Over 120 countries utilize the electrical power analysis software as an industry standard.

A power system modeling facility was also set up at the Iraq MoE to enable them to build upon and apply the technology.

The engineers will benefit from this training as they can now better manage and operate the Iraq transmission system in order to serve the Iraqi population.

Learn More About Capacity Development -- Pamphlet Download

Capacity development is central to the Iraq reconstruction effort and provides the first step in building a foundation for the transfer of control for completed facilities to Iraqi management.

To learn more: <http://www.rebuilding-iraq.net>

Project Overview:

Baghdad Central Rail Station Renovation

By Norris Jones
Gulf Region Central District

Start Date: Aug. 2004 Completion Date: Mar. 2006

Scope of Work – The SOW includes rehabilitation of all the facilities within the four-wing railroad station. This rehab also includes the basement and four surface tunnels. Additional work includes treatment of basement leakage/flooding and dewatering of the surrounding area. A fire fighting system which includes both heat and smoke detectors will also be refurbished. Other project scopes includes design and build of a new plumbing system, electrical, mechanical, water system, and communications.



Effect – The project will repair the facility structures, systems and improves operations for the general public. The local economy will be stimulated and public transportation will again be made comfortable.





Transport Security Operations

Compiled by Ron Eschmann
Project & Contracting Office

Danger is always inherent with each convoy mission whether it's a 30-minute trip or one that last three hours. Iraqi and other non-U.S. convoy drivers and convoy security personnel risk their lives daily to deliver much needed supplies to project sites. Since Aug 2004 there have been 249 convoy attacks that have resulted in a number of dead and wounded.

The most dangerous potential threats facing convoys include ambushes and improvised explosive devices hidden along the supply routes.

To counter these threats, escort gun truck security teams protect the convoys.

Gun trucks used by security firms are usually an armored commercial vehicle, such as the Ford F350 4X4 modified for convoy security. A ring mount allows the individual firing the weapon to have a 360 degree line of fire, rather than just firing out of the front of the vehicle. The weapon mounted in the truck usually depends upon the mission. The weapon is usually situated where it has a clear field of fire within the maximum effective range. Based on the size of the convoy, the placement and number of gun trucks varies.

Mr. Jack Holly, Director for Logistics with the Project and Contracting Office states that due to the professional and tireless efforts of gun truck security personnel, approximately \$3.5B to \$4B worth of goods have been successfully delivered by convoys since Sep. 2004.



The Gulf Region Division/Project & Contracting Office schedules numerous convoys each day. (Photo by Tim Soule)



A gun truck is specifically designed for convoy security. (Photos by Tim Soule)





Police stations in Diwaniyah Province are Complete

By Suzanne M. Fournier
Gulf Region Southern District
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

BASE CAMP ADDER (ALI BASE), Iraq – The Police Chief of Diwaniyah Province, Iraq Reconstruction Management Office Representative Hakim Kawy and Col. Larry McCallister, commander of Gulf Region South District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers cut the ribbon to officially open the 32nd police facility within Diwaniyah Province. Hay Ramadan Police Station is a newly constructed station in a congested, busy residential and market area of city of Diwaniyah. Approximately one-hundred police officers and guests attended the ceremony.



(l to r) The Police Chief of Hay Ramadan Police Station, Police Chief of Diwaniyah Province, Iraq Reconstruction Management Office Representative Hakim Kawy and Col. Larry McCallister, commander of Gulf Region Southern District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, examine the courtyard of the new police facilities at Diwaniyah prior to the ribbon cutting. (Photo courtesy of Gulf Region Southern District)

The police chief talked about the symbolism of this building for all people in this area because like this construction, Iraq is constructing and building a new nation. He thanked all Americans and especially the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Construction started on the new, \$141,000, multi-room police station in early November and was finished this past week. The station has offices and sleeping rooms for the officers, visitation rooms, jails, bathrooms, parking area, perimeter wall, guard tower and emergency generators.

The marbled entrance, landscaped courtyard and brightly painted offices will house officers who fill critical law enforcement roles that provide security and protection for the community residents.

Not only is this the 32 police station within Diwaniyah Province to be constructed, but it is also the final project for the police program of the Security and Justice reconstruction sector built by the U.S. Corps of Engineers using Iraqi Relief and Reconstruction Funds.

Nahia City Council, Coalition Forces Representatives Meet, Discuss Future

Story & Photo by Cpl. Michael Molinaro
4th Inf. Div.

FORWARD OPERATING BASE KALSU, Iraq - The Nahia City Council, made up of representatives from the cities of Iskandariyah and Haswah, met with Coalition Forces leaders Sunday to discuss a variety of issues facing the region in Iraq's fledgling democracy. "The Nahia council is where you find out the will of the people," said Maj. Curt Taylor, Battalion S-3, 2nd Battalion, 8th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division. "The mayor and the police chief then carry out the will of the people."

A big issue brought up during the meeting was a concern about a lack of representation at higher levels of government. Iskandariyah is the largest city in the Qaadaa, or county, yet has little representation at the Qaadaa level of government. The leaders discussed ways of getting the local government to have more input and oversight on future reconstruction projects and management of a new Nahia sanitation program. Democracy is not just having elections," said Sebah Khafaji, chairman of the city council, "it's doing things in good faith and for the people."



Members of the Nahia City Council held a meeting with Coalition Forces leaders.





NGO Spotlight: Potters for Peace

Pennsylvania art professor helps Iraqi development, wants to build clean water filters for distribution

Story and Photo by Spc. Karl Johnson
363rd MPAD

MAHMUDIYAH, Iraq – In a combined effort designed to help the citizens of Iraq, a university art professor has teamed up with the non-profit organization Potters For Peace and the U.S. Army to help provide a means of making potable drinking water.

“Like most developing nations, Iraq has serious problems delivering potable drinking water to its citizens, especially in rural areas where treatment plants are not available,” said Richard Wukich, professor of art at Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania, and an active member of Potters For Peace.

Since the late 1990s, Potters For Peace has been developing low-cost ceramic water filtration systems. According to the group’s website, clinical tests have shown the ceramic filters eliminate over 99 percent of most water-borne disease agents. The filters are in use on five different continents around the world, and several organizations have joined in the effort to get clean water to all of the world’s people.

Slippery Rock University is currently developing a center dedicated to the training and research of this water filter. From that base, Wukich hopes to build the filters and mail them to Soldiers in Iraq for distribution to Iraqi citizens.

“The security that we provide has allowed for many of these NGO’s (non-government organizations) to come to south Baghdad,” said Capt. Darrell Rethford, Company C, 490th Civil Affairs Battalion. “I hope to see a cost-effective water filtration system that we can distribute to Iraqi families to provide them with a source of clean drinking water.”

Both Wukich and the U.S. Soldiers he works with feel the project has the potential to help bring potable water to Iraq along with the added benefit of stimulating its economy.

“We need to develop Iraqi-owned and operated manufacturing facilities that are profitable and thus self-sustaining,” said Wukich.



It is hoped, he said, that the Iraqis will take over the project and begin to provide water purification for their own people.

Work has already begun to choose a location for an Iraqi-run facility that will be designed to build the filters, he said.

Wukich, along with his partners, plans to train the Iraqis on how to build the ceramic filters and how to properly use them as well as educating the local population about the health and hygiene issues that face them every day.

“Iraq’s problem is further compounded by the neglect of the water and sewage system by the old government,” said Wukich. “For a nation blessed with such a wealth of water and other natural resources, the previous governments have squandered their people’s birthright.”

Until Iraq has a reliable water purification system in place, its citizens will continue to be at a high risk of illness due to waterborne pathogens, noted Wukich. “The sooner we get the Iraqis solving their own problems, the sooner our troops come home,” said Wukich.





U.S. Soldiers Provide Tents to Bedouin Families

By U.S. Army Sgt. David Bill
48th Brigade Combat Team

BASE CAMP ADDER, AN NASIRIYA, Iraq — U.S. Soldiers from the 48th Brigade Combat Team and the 406th Corps Support Battalion delivered large tents to five local Iraqi Bedouin families who lost their homes during a recent winter storm which brought high winds and heavy rains to the area.

After the storm, Sheik Mohammed Minshed Tayseer contacted the 48th Brigade Combat Team Civil Affairs office and requested five tents for the five families in his area who were in dire need of shelter after the storm. The civil affairs team requested support of the 16th Combat Support Group who quickly responded to the need by providing shelter in the form of Army tents. The trucks rolled up to the home of Sheik Tayseer, a high-level sheik in the Al Gheezi tribe, who lives near the Hadeyeen village, as a small group of local Iraqis looked on.

U.S. Army Capt. Trent Walsh, of Chico, Calif., the officer in charge of the security at Camp Cedar II, coordinated the convoy to deliver the tents to those in need.

"The Army is providing these large tents to replace those lost as support to the local tribes," said Walsh. "We are glad to do it." The tents were received with great anticipation and excitement as they were quickly unloaded off the 5-ton truck from the 406th Corps Support Battalion.



New tents are loaded on to a pickup truck. (U.S. Army Photo)

Story Continued on Page 10

4th ID Soldiers Assist Iraqi Pilgrims



Staff Sgt. James Dettloff, from the 4th Infantry Division, hands out a humanitarian aid bag to an Iraqi pilgrim, who was traveling from Haswah to the Muslim holy city of Karbala. (Photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Katrina Beeler)

Three Dohuk Water Projects Completed

Spc. Richard Vogt
138th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

DOHUK PROVINCE, Iraq — The 422nd Civil Affairs Battalion and residents of Nerimerki and Tilisquif, completed three water projects.

With help from Ziyad Abdullah, head of the Dohuk Province Department of Water, the 422nd identified the villages' needs. Villagers used to transport water from about two miles away using donkeys. Now, an electric pump pulls river water through a filtration system, into a galvanized steel holding tank in the village center.

"We feel great to get this service," said Hommad Omar Hussein, a resident of 70 years. "We've had no water for 30 years, so this is a great occasion."

In Tilisquif, a group of about 75 people came out for their ribbon-cutting ceremony despite the rain and cold. In the village of Behere, construction of a retention wall to trap run-off water from rain and snow was completed. "The whole village will benefit," said Abdullah. "Everybody's going to benefit. There's been a drought for the past couple of years, so it's good that we will have a steady supply of water. This water is good not just for farming, but also for tourism and recreation," he said.



Iraq Reconstruction Update



Projects at a Glance (As of: February 24, 2006)

Compiled by Katie Wall, PCO

- \$7.793 billion has been disbursed, representing 60% of total funds (as of February 26, 2006)
- 2,750 projects starts (out of 3,022 planned projects). This number includes 360 projects funded under the Development Fund Iraq (DFI)
- 2,105 projects are complete, including 326 that are funded under the DFI

Reconstruction Sector	Project Type	# Under Construction*	# Completed*
Health & Education	Schools	21	825
	Primary Health Care Centers	139	14
	Hospital Projects	16	13
	Public Buildings	4	51
Public Works & Water	Potable Water Projects	98	184
	Sewer Projects	7	31
Security & Justice	Fire Stations	24	63
	Military Base Projects	14	63
	Police Facilities	46	299
Transportation & Communication	Railroad Stations	6	92
	Village Roads	25	87
	Ports Projects	3	3
	Postal Facilities	1	23
	Airport Projects (FAA certified ready)	8	6
	Expressways	3	0
Electricity	Distribution Projects (including Substations)	91	103
	Transmission Projects	17	12
	Power Generation Projects	1	19
Oil	Dedicated Power Plants	2	3
	Water Injection Pump Stations	0	8

* Note: Project numbers include projects funded by the Development Fund Iraq.

Source: Multiple PCO Management Reports





Sector Overview: Current Status – End State

Compiled By: John Daley, PCO



Sector	Current Status	End State
Electricity	1,366 MW capacity added Increased Power Generation to 1200K Homes Improved Electricity Distribution to over 130K Homes	1,523 MW capacity added Increased Power Generation to 1,300K Homes Improved Electricity Distribution to over 600K Homes
Oil	2.5 Million Barrels Per Day (MBPD) production capacity 1.7 MBPD produced	3.0 MBPD crude oil capacity
Water & Sewer	Added 181,000 cubic meters per day of water treatment capacity (benefits an estimated 756,000 Iraqis) 31,000 hectares of additional irrigated land	Additional 897,000 cubic meters per day of water treatment capacity (will benefit approximately 3.6 million Iraqis) 251,000 hectares of additional irrigated land
Health	14 primary healthcare centers completed and 139 under construction	Population of 5 to 6.5 million Iraqis served in completed primary healthcare centers
Education	825 schools providing classrooms for 325,000 students	847 schools providing classrooms for 330,000 students
Security & Justice	299 police facilities completed 108 border forts completed	346 police facilities 165 border forts
Transportation	224 Kilometers (KM) or 53% of planned improved village roads Provided emergency response dispatch system ('911' service) covering 5.8 million citizens of Baghdad	424 KM of improved village roads 158 KM of improved major roads Provide emergency response dispatch system ('911' service) covering 12 million Iraqis in 15 cities

As of: February 24, 2006

Source: Multiple GRD-PCO Management Reports





International Developments

Compiled from State Dept. Reports

Finland cancels 80 percent of Iraq's debt in bilateral agreement: As part of Iraq's ongoing efforts to restructure the country's foreign debt left over from the Saddam Hussein era, Iraqi officials announced on February 16 the signing of a bilateral debt relief agreement with Finland. The agreement meets Paris Club terms and forgives 80 percent (\$200 million) of Iraq's \$250 million debt to Finland.

Iraq to sign wheat deals with Canadian, German and US suppliers: Iraq's grain board revealed plans to purchase wheat from Canadian, German and US suppliers. The head of the Iraqi Grain Board clarified that the board decided to deal with Canada, Germany and United States after suspending trade with Australia's wheat exporter.

Russia promises continued support: On Feb. 16, the United Nations envoy to Iraq briefed Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov on the situation in Iraq, focusing on the December 15 elections and the role of the UN Assistance Mission. During the visit, Lavrov expressed his "appreciation" for the UN role in Iraq and "promised continued Russian support."

Arab League sponsored National Reconciliation Conference set for June: On Feb. 21, during a visit to Baghdad, Arab League envoy Mustafa Othman announced that the "National Reconciliation Conference", a meeting of Iraqi politicians and organizations organized by the Arab League, will take place in Iraq in early June.

Story Continued From Page 2...Iraqi Women Win Contracts

"I saw first hand the quality work that Iraqi firms can build, from the very small \$100,000 or less, to the larger several million dollar projects," she said. "Included in those firms are several women-owned businesses, as they are also winning construction contracts."

As of Jan. 30, there are nearly 6,000 actual projects started with a program value of \$ 2.5 billion. Currently, 2,200 projects are ongoing with a program value of

\$3.2 billion. About 3,700 projects have been completed with a program value of about \$ 2.5 billion.

Probably the most important component of the partnership is the work done by the Iraqi firms, Corps officials said. The work includes school renovations, health clinics and hospitals, border forts, police and fire stations, public buildings, water treatment units and plants, water supply facilities, sewer networks, work at oil refineries to increase oil production and revenue, and electrical generation, transmission, and distribution projects. Durham-Aguilera told the group about her Middle Eastern roots. Her mother, who was Lebanese, had family that came from a village outside Beirut.

She continues to receive e-mail from Iraqi women telling of their continued progress.

Hospital Receives Building Surgery

Story & Photo by Claude D. McKinney
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

BAQUBAH, Iraq—After a year under construction, the Baqubah General Hospital is finished ... with a new

incinerator and reverse osmosis water treatment system; plumbing and sewer system upgrade; architectural renovation; emergency backup generator and repair of existing elevators. The completed project was accepted by US Army Corps of Engineers and the Directorate General of Health. While the renovations were ongoing the hospital was open and operational.

The facility is a 331-bed hospital with Surgery and Consultation service clinics that treat 400-500 patients daily.

It is one of two hospitals in Baqubah.



Story Continued From Page 6...Tents to Bedouin Families

"It feels good to provide for the locals," said U.S. Army Spc. Jason Douthitt, of Evansville, Ind., a member of the 406th Corps Support Battalion.

Douthitt was one of the Soldiers who helped roll the tents from the truck.

The Iraqi recipients of the tents indicated they much appreciated the effort.

"You [coalition forces] saved me from death to life," said Kadhém Utob, a retired farmer who watched as his shelters were loaded into the bed of a small pickup truck.

"You are providing good support for the people of Iraq. I give thanks to you."





Little Known Reconstruction Stories: Resurrection of the Mail System by USPS **US Postal Service Team Helps Rebuild Iraqi Post**

By USPS Public Affairs

The opening of the new Iraqi Post International Service Center (ISC) was a significant step in rebuilding the country's postal system. The ISC is a vital gateway — in-bound and out-bound Iraq to the world," said New York Area Manager of Operations Support Ray Murphy.

Built from scratch in a Baghdad International Airport cargo terminal, the ISC needed everything - from X-ray machines to distribution equipment - "all the postal equipment you would expect to fill a post office," said Murphy. Before the team arrived, Iraq had not sent international airmail for 15 years. Murphy said getting that service up and running was a priority — as a primary link to the world community and to encourage international commerce with Iraq.

Within a week, Iraq received seven tons of in-bound mail.



Iraq's new postal code system was introduced the same day the ISC opened. "In effect, we ZIP-coded the entire country," Murphy said. "It took six months, working with an Iraqi team aligning the country and converting the system to Arabic." The system is a first step toward address standardization and automated sorting.

Baghdad is assigned codes 10001 through 10090, which correspond to Manhattan ZIP Codes - a link that the USPS team members from New York Metro Area say helps forge a bond between the two cities. Forging another vital link with the international community, Iraq rejoined the Universal Postal Union (UPU) and established mail treaties with all 189 member countries.

An agreement was negotiated for Iraq to pay its UPU dues from past years interest-free. The payments were made about a week before the USPS team left Iraq. With \$20 million budgeted for equipment, the first large purchase was 100,000 post office boxes, so Iraqi Post could start generating revenue and foster other business growth.

"Our strategy was to set up box lines and establish addresses so small entrepreneurs would rent boxes," Murphy said. "Then they have a legitimate address where they can deal with customers, and bill-paying, internationally." So far, 80 percent of the newly installed boxes are being used.

"We were truly in the field, the red zone," said Murphy. To get to the ISC at the airport, the team traveled "the most dangerous road in Baghdad" with military backup. "There were times when it got pretty hairy," he said. The team also traveled to non-secured areas to work with "real" Iraqi post employees. "Postal workers don't change much over the world," Murphy said, "They were happy to have us there and really bonded with us."

Murphy said Post employees - and other Iraqis they met - are energetic, motivated and ready to serve. "The Iraqis are an impressive people," he said. "They are educated and enthusiastic about the future," he added.

"Under the old regime, all the mail was opened and anything of value was stolen," said team member Lou DeMeo. "There was no confidence in the system at all."

Iraq's Postmaster General is working to win back the people's confidence. "It's starting to happen," DeMeo said, "They are seeing that they can mail something to the international market and it arrives within a reasonable time." One test mailing to the U.S. took eight days — better than reasonable under the circumstances. After USPS completes its mission, assistance will be provided through a five-year plan jointly developed with the Iraqi Post. The plan outlines strategies for growth and expansion.





Infrastructure Team Makes the 'POInT'

by Tech. Sgt. Ken Sloat
506th Air Expeditionary Group Public Affairs

KIRKUK AIR BASE, Iraq -- A group of Air Force civil engineers huddle in front of a large wall map at the back of the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), 1st Brigade Combat Team's headquarters here. The red and green lines that meander from dot to dot across the large white map command their attention.

They are the Power and Oil Infrastructure Team, or POInT, part of the only Air Force public works team embedded with Army units in Iraq. The three Airmen assigned to the Kirkuk team are involved in the construction, refurbishment and security of key infrastructure facilities. They are currently responsible for tracking more than \$32 million worth of construction projects.

Building truck scales and guard towers are just two of the many projects they've tackled since the original members came here nearly a year ago. The Airmen represent a small portion of the approximately 3,000 "in lieu of," or ILO, forces in a joint-service role supporting the Army as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom. They are officially assigned to Detachment 16, 732nd Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron at Balad Air Base.

The concept of ILO forces began in 2003, said Chief Master Sgt. Paul Kaplan, the electrical liaison officer deployed from Travis Air Force Base, Calif. There are less than 15 Detachment 16 members in the entire country of Iraq, and they are at three different locations in the country.

Nearly a third of the POInT's time is spent meeting with representatives of the state-owned refineries and power plants that produce the oil, natural gas and electrical power for northern Iraq, said Tech. Sgt. Billy Tramel. The oil infrastructure liaison officer is deployed from Hill AFB, Utah. "We meet with these people to listen to what they've got to say," Sergeant Tramel said. "Some of the issues are simple; others are not." Recently, when a large volume gas turbine generator, one capable of producing enough electricity to power 200,000 homes, was having problems running with a lower quality natural gas, the group came up with a solution.

While their long-term solution is still pending, their short-term solution was relatively simple and involved re-routing the supply lines to pull from a different well.



Chief Master Sgt. Paul Kaplan, the electrical infrastructure liaison officer, inspects a damaged high-voltage power line tower with an Iraqi Army officer. (U.S. Air Force photo)

"Sometimes we see if we can get them working together to solve mutual problems," Sergeant Tramel said. When something, like a fire happens at one of the wells, the team assesses the damage and provides senior leadership with an overview of how the damage might impact the country's oil or natural gas production.

"The people...making this whole process move towards total Iraqi control, have to know what the impact is of an infrastructure attack," said Maj. Don Treanor, officer in charge of the POInT here. He is deployed from Eglin AFB, Fla. "We don't have the in-depth knowledge to do that," he said, "We depend on the locals who do have that knowledge."

Because their mission takes the team off base anywhere from 15 to 20 times a month, they are often in harm's way. For Sergeant Tramel, it's just part of the job. "It's just what I've been tasked to do," he said. "Sure, there are dangers, but at the same time we have a mission to accomplish." He's not naive about the dangers. The vehicle he was riding in was disabled by an improvised explosive device and he's even discovered an unexploded one.

Although Sergeant Tramel is likely to downplay the significance of what his team is doing in Iraq, even he can't deny it will have an effect on the future of the country.

With the still untapped natural gas deposits estimated to be large enough to fuel the whole eastern world, the capabilities the team provides to their Iraqi partners are the foundation of a stronger nation in the future.





A Reconstruction Partnership



Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army (ASA) for Acquisition, Logistics and Technology (ALT)

<https://webportal.saalt.army.mil/main/aae.htm>

Assistant Secretary: *The Honorable Claude M. Bolton, Jr.*

Principal Deputy to the ASA (ALT)/Director of Iraq Reconstruction and Program Management: *Mr. Dean Popp*



US Army Corps of Engineers - Gulf Region Division <http://www.grd.usace.army.mil/index.html>

Commanding General: *Brig. Gen. William H. McCoy, Jr.*

Iraq Project & Contracting Office

<http://www.rebuilding-iraq.net>

Director- Baghdad: *Brig. Gen. William H. McCoy, Jr. (dual-hatted GRD-PCO)*

Deputy Director for Reconstruction: *Ms. Kathy Johnson*

Director-Washington: *Mr. James M. Crum*



Joint Contracting Command – Iraq/Afghanistan

JCC-IA provides responsive operational contracting support to the Chief of Mission and Multi-National Corps - Iraq to efficiently acquire vital supplies, services and construction in support of the Coalition Forces and the relief and reconstruction of Iraq.

Commander: *Maj. Gen. Darryl A. Scott*



Office of the Assistant Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army (Policy and Procurement), Iraq
DASA(P&P)-I provides the necessary administrative and contracting support to the Chief of Mission, Project and Contracting Office, Multi-National Forces, and supports the humanitarian relief, reconstruction, and security of Iraq.

ADASA(P&P)-I: *Mr. Lee Thompson*



For further Iraq reconstruction and assistance information:

U.S. Agency for International Development: <http://www.usaid.gov/iraq>

U.S. Department of Commerce: <http://www.export.gov/iraq>

U.S. Embassy in Iraq: <http://iraq.usembassy.gov>

U.S. Central Command: <http://www.centcom.mil>

Multi-National Force – Iraq: <http://www.mnf-iraq.com>

Multi-National Security Transition Command – Iraq <http://www.mnstci.iraq.centcom.mil/>



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